

**ED 102: Introduction to American Education**

Fall 2006

School of Education

University of Rhode Island

Instructor: Jay Fogleman  
Office: 711 Chafee  
Phone: 874-4161 (o)  
Email: fogleman@mail.uri.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesday & Friday, 12:30 – 1:30 or by appointment  
Time/Location: MWF, 11:00am – 11:50am / 214 Quinn Hall

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

The goal of this course is for students to develop an understanding of education in American society and to begin to analyze educational principles and practices. Students will begin to investigate the complicated work that teachers do and to compare their interests, skills, and aspirations with those of successful educators. Emphasis will be placed on students' actively synthesizing information and developing their own coherent points of view regarding teaching and learning in American public schools. The course incorporates themes of diversity through an overview of the historical events that have contributed to the current status of schools in the US.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

*To answer the question "Who is in our schools today?," you should be able to:*

- Identify the characteristics of professions and develop an argument for or against declaring teaching a profession.
- Identify the basic requirements for the initial teaching license in Rhode Island, or in another state where you plan to teach.
- Describe what we mean by culture and groups within a culture.
- Describe the theories and ideologies that influence how schools respond to students from diverse groups.
- Identify the challenges that many students face as a result of being at risk because of societal factors, such as poverty, over which they have little or no control.
- Explain the role that prejudice and discrimination play in marginalizing many students.
- Discuss the importance of diversity, equality, and social justice in delivering high-quality education for all students.
- Describe the role that schools play in the education and socialization of today's children and youth.

*To answer the question "How and what we should teach in school?," you should be able to:*

- Identify different conceptions of standards and analyze the consequences that these conceptions have for teaching and learning.
- Define accountability for student learning and describe how the No Child Left Behind Act is holding schools, districts, and states accountable for student achievement.

- Understand the meaning of “helping all students learn” and explain how standards and assessments may influence efforts to meet this goal.
- Define philosophy and describe methods of inquiry used by philosophers.
- Elaborate on the major tenets of idealism, realism, pragmatism, and existentialism.
- Relate philosophical concepts to teaching and learning.
- Describe the characteristics of Eastern and Native North American ways of knowing.
- Identify the major tenets of *authoritarian* educational philosophies of essentialism, behaviorism, and positivism.
- Identify the major tenets of *non-authoritarian* educational philosophies of progressivism, humanism, and constructivism.
- Relate educational philosophy to classroom organization, discipline practices, motivation, and classroom climate.
- State the components of a personal philosophy of education.
- Describe and analyze characteristics of direct and indirect teaching strategies.
- Compare the learning needs of different types of learners and the relative effectiveness of different teaching strategies.

*To answer the question “What has led us to where we are now?,” you should be able to:*

- Describe the organizational structure of schools, school districts, and the authority relationships among schools, states, and the federal government.
- Analyze pro and con arguments for increasing school choice.
- Summarize key components of the rights and responsibilities of teachers as determined by key US Supreme Court decisions.
- Be clear about a teacher's responsibilities and liabilities related to negligence.
- List and detail several of the most important improvements that have been made in the US educational system over the past half century.

### ***Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards central to this course***

Standard 1. Teachers create learning experiences using a broad base of general knowledge that reflects an understanding of the nature of the world in which we live.

Standard 4. Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect a respect for the diversity of learners and an understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning.

Standard 7. Teachers foster collaborative relationships with colleagues and families to support students' learning.

## **COURSE ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION**

Your performance will be evaluated on the following:

### ***Class attendance, participation, and completion of in-class assignments (10%)***

Students who miss more than three class sessions will be expected to complete work completed during class or alternative assignment from instructor (e.g., analyses and summary of materials and/or reading). It is the student's responsibility to keep track of missing classes and to turn in missed assignments within one week of absence. Every student should ask a classmate to collect a copy of handouts should they be absent. Missing or late assignments will receive an F.

Each class session will require some form of active participation such as peer teaching/presenting, discussion, groupwork, etc. Students should be prepared to apply the knowledge from their assigned reading when they attend each class.

### ***Reading Quizzes - 30%***

If a reading quiz is assigned, this should be completed by the beginning of the week. Reading quizzes should be taken online and emailed to the instructor *by the beginning of Monday's class*. Chapters for which reading quizzes are required are indicated in the course schedule.

The reading quizzes are online. Go to [http://wps.ablongman.com/ab\\_johnson\\_introfound\\_14](http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_johnson_introfound_14) and choose the appropriate chapter from the list at the top of the main window and then click on the “**Practice Test**” link on the left hand side of the page. I found some of the “correct” quiz answers dubious. After you take the quiz, if you disagree with how it was scored, be sure to be prepared to discuss your objections in Monday's class!

### ***Context Statement: Learning About the Standards of the Profession, a School, and a Classroom - 30%***

During first third of the course, we'll learn about who is teaching and learning in public schools. We'll also use various websites to learn more about what is happening in local school districts. Your task will be to apply this information to describe a specific Rhode Island district. The specific requirements for this assignment will be distributed later in the course.

### ***Description of Standards-Based Lesson – 10%***

During the second third of the course, we will apply what we are learning to the challenge of planning instruction that addresses standards and applies different teaching approaches. Instead of a formal lesson plan, each student will create a description of a lesson, including its goals, strategies, etc. You'll receive more specific requirements about this assignment later in the course.

### ***Group Public Policy Project - 20%***

During the last third of the class, we will continue to learn about issues that are currently affecting the American education. Your main assignment during this time will be to work in a small group to create a policy statement that identifies an issue, explains why it requires attention, and recommends a specific course of action. Specific instructions for this project will be distributed later in the course.

Revision Policy: You may revise any written assignment (time permitting) to improve your grade. Before you begin, however, you should make an appointment with the instructor to determine what revisions would be worthwhile and what credit you may receive.

Your final letter grade will be determined according to the following scale:

A <sup>+</sup> (98-100)	A (93-97)	A <sup>-</sup> (90-92)	B <sup>+</sup> (87-89)	B (83-86)	B <sup>-</sup> (80-82)
C <sup>+</sup> (77-79)	C (73-76)	C <sup>-</sup> (70-72)	D <sup>+</sup> (67-69)	D (63-66)	D <sup>-</sup> (60-62)
F (59 points or below)					

If you have a documented disability that may require individual accommodations, please make an appointment with me prior the third class meeting. We will discuss how to meet your individual needs to ensure your full participation and fair assessment procedures.

**Course Text**

**Foundations of American Education: Perspectives on Education in a Changing World, 14th Edition** by James A Johnson, Diann Musial, Gene Hall, Donna Gollnick, and Victor Dupuis. Boston: Pearson Education.